

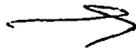
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NR Record



BULGARIA: Reform Leaders Battle Hardliners

Bulgaria's reform-minded leadership is pushing ahead with change despite growing opposition within the Communist Party. After the conclusion of an unscheduled Central Committee plenum Thursday night called to discuss the crisis in the party, Sofia announced yesterday that Communist Party organizations in the Army would be disbanded. After a National Assembly session broke down on Thursday, the chairman of the Assembly explained that a broad consensus between opposition forces and the Communist Party was needed before the Assembly could adopt new measures. The Politburo released no other details on the Central Committee session, but a Western press source indicates that party leaders advocated forming a coalition government with the opposition. [redacted]

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Comment: The breakdown of the Assembly session shows that opponents of reform are becoming more vocal and probably will challenge the leadership at next week's extraordinary party congress. By endorsing a coalition government, reformist party leaders probably are trying to line up support among the opposition so they can defeat any attempt by hardliners to regain power. A coalition could lead to inclusion of the opposition in the government as early as next week. [redacted]

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